

The Week

A NEWS ANALYSIS FOR SOCIALISTS
Vol. 5, No. 11. 17th March, 1966

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**SOME
QUESTIONS
TO
LABOUR
LEADERS**

UNIONS IN DANGER

54 Park Road, Lenton, Nottingham

Subscription: £2 per annum and pro rata

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Vol. 2, No. 11, 17th March, 1966

UNIONS IN DANGER

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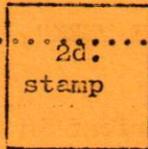
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UNIONS IN DANGER!

The hue and cry about the "workers' courts" is surely one of the biggest election stunts that the Tories and press have pulled since the Zinoviev letter. Unfortunately, it can be amply demonstrated that the present Labour leadership are directly responsible for the state of affair in which the Tories and the press dare try tricks like this.

First, it needs to be said loudly and clearly by the left that there was n nothing wrong in what the workers did at Cowley. On the contrary, their action was in accord with age-long traditions of the working class. Exactly a century ago, the "Sheffield outrages", in which trade unionists took violent action against blacklegs, triggered off an anti-union witchhunt which is only paralleled by the events of today. The people the Tory press are rushing in to defend and paint as martyrs were known among the workers by the dirtiest word in the English working class vocabulary - scab. The employers and their spokesmen have always rushed to defence of scabs and shed crocodile tears over the 'undemocratic' and painful treatment accorded to them. There is nothing new in all this. What is new is that after a long period in which they merely sniped at the "growing strength of the unions" the Tories now feel confident in coming out into the open. Why is this? Why in the 1966 general election do we have this scare, this attempt to stampede middle class elements back into the Tory camp, whilst in the 1964 election this issue assumed only marginal importance? The answer is very clear: because the Wilson Government blazed the path by concentrating its fire on the unions. The Tories are now quitesure that any reaction from the Labour leadership will be half-hearted and weak. They knew in advance that Mr. Gunter would talk of "not hesitating to take unpopular measures action" to deal with the unions. Thus once again we have the lesson drummed into our heads: every time the Labour leadership take a rightward step they push the whole political bandwagon over with them.

How, then must socialists meet this smear campaign against the stewards? Any attempt to go half-way to the Tory position merely strengthens their hands. We must support the workers at Cowley taking their moral sanctions against scabs because sanctions are a vitally necessary weapon in the armoury of the workers in building and defending their unions. We can only reject as hypocritical the charges of "mob rule" and inhumanity" - what about the hundreds of "kangaroo courts" in which, behind the scenes, active trade unionists have been victimised. What about the speed-up, which is taking place in all large factories, which particularly penalises the older workers? And as for the Labour leaders, Mr. Gunter might tell us about "kangaroo courts" which decided to close down hundreds of pits, displacing thousands of men in the most brutal manner? The whole left must stand firm and fight back.

It must have been said many times already that the coming General Election is going to be critical for the left. But the reasons for this should be clearly understood by every socialist, and his/her actions in the campaign based on the conclusions drawn. Whether Wilson wins by a majority of 5 or 205, we must try to prevent him from doing so with a blank cheque for the future. If he can claim that his policies have been approved by the voters, we are going to be in a weak position in the next Parliament, because our silence will have amounted to support. What we must do, is fight for the maximum Labour majority obtainable, so as to increase the absolute number and proportion of Left-wingers in Parliament, but at the same time try to prevent all of the credit going to Wilson, and more positively, try to circumscribe the freedom of every possible/MP on such issues as support for the US in Vietnam, etc.

It would seem at first as if the means used to achieve these various aims are bound to be contradictory, but I hope to show that this is not necessarily so. Firstly, will dissent and self-criticism harm the Labour Party's chance in the election? I think not, partly because of the available evidence to the contrary (in the Hull North by-election, opposition to government policy by the 'Humberside Voice' group-supporting, working and voting for the Labour candidate -was probably more annoying to the right-wing than that of Richard Gott) but also because of the dull nature of consensus politics. Whenever there is little difference between the alternatives, it is the Labour Party which suffers, as working-class voters are harder to mobilise than middle-class ones. But supposing there were in many areas groups of left-wingers determined to raise the important issues by every means at their disposal. Not only would political awareness and interest be increased by the airing of real alternatives to the fake consensus, but also the socialist case would be given a fair hearing. The actual result of this in the election would be to increase the turn-out, and hence the Labour vote, partly by loyalists rallying to the Labour Party to resist the "rocking of the boat", but also by socialists and progressive-liberals being given evidence that although Government policy, say on immigration, is illiberal and reactionary, the battle is not yet over in the Labour Party as a whole.

Such a campaign, if it won a lot of publicity, would demonstrate clearly that the Labour Party is still a coalition, with room in it for disagreement, and that an election victory should not be interpreted as a victory for the right-wing. To get down to precise details of how to conduct a campaign of this type: Try to get a local newspaper to print a statement of your views, or a series of questions for the Labour candidate to answer. For general activities, a minimum of three activists is probably necessary, so as to prepare pamphlets, open letters, letters to newspapers, etc., to duplicate them, and to attend every local meeting at which the Labour candidate is present. It is very important that any pressmen present get copies of any open-letters, and these could also be sent to papers like the Guardian, Observer, New Statesman. There should be a theme to any publication, eg- Incomes Policy, Vietnam, education, industrial organisation. The tone of all publications should be restrained and rational, otherwise readers not yet sharing your basic assumptions may be prevented from ever doing so. Attack the Conservatives, wherever relevant, and criticise Labour for being too much like them. Show the relevance of socialist alternatives, and question why they are not being tried. Do not say "Vote Labour", or an estimated sum for your expenditure may be added to the

Cont'd over...

In an article in "New Society" (3rd March) Professor Nathan Glazer exposed the sham U.S. Anti-Poverty Programme: "The entire \$ 1.5 billion for the anti-poverty programme is about 1.5% of the Federal budget or about $\frac{1}{4}$ of 1% of the gross national product... Whether the poverty-stricken are 15 or 25% of the American people may be argued. Certainly there are a good number of them." The money spent on the programme is not wasted: "...through these programmes we subsidise some parts of our affluent society which we know are starved, such as maintenance work in city parks."

Perhaps one of the most interesting parts of Professor Glazer's article is when he discusses some possible results of the Community Action Programme: "Politically, the Community Action Programme can be a feather in the mayor's cap, or it can provide political resources, in the form of paid organisers, offices, mimeograph machines and paper supplies, for a variety of groups, and thus frighten political leaders out of their wits! What will the organisers be up to? Their activities may begin. They organise the people on a block to discuss their problems, but they may go on to organise a rent strike against slum-lords, or even to throwing garbage on the mayor's lawn in protest against poor garbage-collections. And they may go on to educating the poor to believe that the power structure is against them and will be moved only by militant organisation and outrageous action." Remembering Los Angeles you can see his point.

THE LEFT MUST FIGHT, cont'd

Labour candidate's election expenditure, possibly resulting in a contravention of election law. Give your address as publisher, in case sympathisers may wish to contact you. Try to get your candidate to give a definite answer some time during the election to some carefully chosen questions, and do not let him get away with vague reassurances. Avoid being dismissed as belonging to the political fringe by making your help for the candidate in the election campaign known, both to the local party and to readers of your publications, eg- "As supporters of the Labour candidate, we should like to ask him..."

Finally, if any group is interested in conducting a campaign of this type, but lacks resources, in people, ideas or equipment, then write to me at the address below. We are hoping to be able to sell open letters, etc. at the cost of the paper, and may be able to help in other ways as well.

Colin Stoneman, The Old School House,
Swine, HULL.

TWO INTERESTING MEETINGS FOR NOTTINGHAM C.S.E.

from Geoff Coggan

The next two meetings of the Nottingham Centre for Socialist Education are both interesting and important. On Friday the 18th of March, Quintin Hoare of New Left Review will speak on Antonio Gramsci. This will give Nottingham members of the C.S.E. a unique opportunity to hear someone who has made a special study of the great Italian theoretician and socialist. Too few people in Britain know of Gramsci's contributions to theory, which are of special relevance to the problems of building a marxist movement in an advanced capitalist country. On Friday, 1st of April, Ray Thorpe, District organiser of the TGWU will speak to Nottingham CSE. The meeting will be very pertinent to the discussion about the likely relations between the newly elected Government and the unions. Both meetings start at 7.30 and are held as usual in the People's Hall, Heathcote St.

Since June 1965 seventeen members of the Guiana Peoples' Progressive Party have been imprisoned without trial and without any charges being preferred against them. More have recently been detained under similar circumstances. Because of the current repressive regime, protest in Guiana is difficult and any efforts made in this country on behalf of the prisoners is of great importance. It is also urgent that any action taken be taken quickly since Guiana becomes independent on 26th May, 1966. In order to coordinate protests in the Birmingham area a committee has been set up. Anyone in the Birmingham area who would be prepared to help should write to: Mrs. Mary Nunes (wife of the detained chairman of the P.P.P.) at 5/34, Barford Rd., Ladywood, Birmingham, 16. The address of the London branch of the P.P.P. is: 8, Spring St., London, W.2

MORE UNEMPLOYMENT BY THE END OF THE YEAR? from our economics correspondent

The National Institute of Economic and Social Research has just published its appraisal of the economic outlook for the next twelve months. It has some interesting points to make. It forecasts that by the end of 1966 unemployment will be around 450,000 and still rising. Most economic observers had predicted rising unemployment by this winter, but in practice unemployment has fallen to its lowest figure for nearly ten years. Given the deflationary measures taken since October, 1964, this has been the source of some comment and surprise. However, it now seems that there were some unexpected elements in the situation last year. The effect of the reduction of the normal working hours in many industries seems to have had a larger impact than the previous deflation of 1960-61. Also it seems clear that the employers have been hoarding labour for a longer period than previously. Another factor seems to have been the continuing effects of the big increases in investment, both in the public and private sectors in 1964, which lasted well into 1965. Coupled with this was the reduction in personal savings in 1965, which would tend to keep demand buoyant for longer than anticipated.

Some of the above factors can be expected to weaken in coming months. The latest Confederation of British Industry's survey of industry shows that profit margins are under growing pressure. Three-fifths of industry reported rising unit costs, and only 14% reported increased selling prices. Moreover, 47% reported that they were working below capacity, whilst only 33% reported a rise in total orders, as against 66% either having static or declining total orders. For export orders, only 22% reported increased orders as against 78% as being down or static. This is an important point to keep in mind, since there are reports that the U.S. Government may soon be forced to take steps against the growing inflationary situation in America. This could lead to a loss of British export orders, and possibly a movement of funds from London to New York if the U.S. bank rate is raised. If any large movement of funds does take place it could mean a return to the 7% bank rate here and also a further credit squeeze.

The NIESP, however, have warned against a deflationary budget given the existing situation. But give a deterioration in the reserves (and sterling is under pressure again) a tough budget will be forced upon the Government, given its commitment to preserve the exchange rate and its unwillingness to impose import quotas. Therefore there is a real possibility that unemployment may rise at a somewhat faster rate than the Institute's forecast. Further, the Institute calculates that the Government's prices policy held down retail price rises by about only $\frac{1}{2}$ % in 1965. What all this does mean is that anti-trade union legislation and a tough incomes policy will become the major priorities of whichever government is returned to power.

THOSE AIRCRASHES- A POINT OF VIEW

We are reprinting the following extract from the Japanese Communist Party paper, Akaharta, because we think these facts are interesting and offer a serious theory as to why there have been so many fatal aircrashes. "The root cause of the recent successive air crashes in Japan is that the Japanese cannot use freely their own airspace. Taking advantage of the Japan-U.S. "Security Treaty", the U.S. has monopolised many excellent airports in Japan and designated 'special airspace' for exclusive use by U.S. forces, causing congestion of civil airlines and frequent accidents." The 'Akaharta' article pointed out that Japanese air communication authorities have no right over the U.S. special airspace. Such airspace is called an "air bulwark" by the U.S. forces... Civil airlines from Tokyo to Osaka cannot take a direct route, but must make a detour of the "air bulwark" in Kanto, Chubu and Hokuriku areas. Thus all civil airplanes can only enter the Haneda Airport in Tokyo from the east side. At the same time, the U.S. forces in Japan and the Japanese 'self-defence forces' are monopolising a great number of airports with good conditions. For instance, the Yokoda base used by the U.S. forces is seven times as big as the Haneda Airport. With the escalation of the U.S. war in Vietnam, the U.S. has chartered great numbers of transports of U.S. civil airlines and has shipped weapons, ammunitions and troops to South Vietnam through Japan, resulting in a rapid increase in the traffic at Haneda Airport."

YOUTH MOVEMENT UNDER ATTACK

from "The Militant".

On March 4th, Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach announced that he was petitioning the Subversive Activities' Control Board to order the DuBois Clubs to register as a 'Communist Front' under the McCarran Act. On March 5th a press conference was held by the Brooklyn, N.Y., DuBois Club to protest against Katzenbach's action. As this press conference came to an end, a gang of hoodlums which had been mobilized outside the DuBois Club's Headquarters began throwing eggs, cans and other objects. Several policemen arrived. As members of the youth organisation left the headquarters, they were attacked and they ran to their cars... the police pulled four of them from their automobile and threw them into squad cars. The police aided the right-wing gang. One member relates "the police held my arms while people hit me, and a cop cursed me and hit me with a billy". A Negro youth singled out as a target by the police and the mob, says "the cops stood around and laughed while we were beaten." The leader of the New York DuBois Clubs, said that the New York 'Daily News' reporter spit at DuBois Club members.

The police did not arrest any of the attacking gang, but arrested six DuBois Club members- all under twenty years old. The next day, March 6th a blast shattered the national headquarters of the DuBois Clubs in San Francisco. Police investigators report that the charge was placed beneath the porch, and it is estimated that as many as 40 sticks of dynamite may have been used in the explosion. The buildings on either side of the Club were wrecked by the explosion.

HAMPSTEAD YOUNG SOCIALISTS SUPPORT VIETNAM SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN

The Hampstead branch of the Young Socialists has officially decided to support the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign. The branch has written to the secretary of the campaign offering full support and practical assistance. A number of other branches of the Young Socialists are expected to follow suit in the next month or so as the campaign for supporting organisations gets under way.

SOCIALIST PLANNING FOR THE HIGHLANDS by Alec Bagley

Keith Openshaw's Fabian pamphlet presents a well-documented and detailed plan which could transform the economy of Highland Britain. He suggests that a Land Planning Authority be set up with powers to plant up to 7 million acres of forestry, more than double the present forest area of Britain. The land most suitable for planting is the marginal farming land at present used as rough grazing for sheep and inadequate cover for grouse. This sort of land use is not only uneconomic (if it were not for subsidies, practically all hill sheep farmers would be out of business) but also stands in the way of a flourishing forest industry, such as exists in Scandinavia, the Soviet Union and Canada. Forestry employs 10 more workers to the acre than does sheep farming, and stimulates the growth of many secondary industries, from obvious ones like pulp and paper mills to new industries with exciting possibilities like wood chemicals. Openshaw's vision foresees a time in the not-too-distant future when the repopulation of the Highlands could become a reality, providing a model for socialist planning in all areas of Britain.

Unlike most of the left-wing press, the vested interests which have presided over the exploitation of Highlanders for centuries have taken notice of Openshaw's ideas. And they are trying to kill the plan before the pussy-footing planners on the regional development boards begin to take it seriously. Thus Peter Simple in the Daily Telegraph has likened the planting of trees on bare hillsides to the desecration of beautiful paintings, while Robin Douglas-Home in the Daily Express has claimed that the grouse moors are really profitable (for whom?) and has defended them against the suggestion that they be "heavily taxed". (What Openshaw in fact suggests is that all under-used land should be taxed according to its potential - Home's "heavily taxed" phrase looks like an admission that the grouse moors are grossly under-used). Some attacks are even cruder: the farming correspondent of one Aberdeen newspaper with a wide circulation in the North of Scotland has described Openshaw's well-documented facts as "half-baked balderdash", without offering so much as one fact to refute them.

The indignant and irrational reactions of such writers is, however, an encouraging sign. Not long ago they could have afforded to ignore such a plan, but after the massive Tory defeat in Highland areas at the last election they must at least pay lip service to such words as "development". Openshaw's pamphlet presents a socialist attack on the problem which combined realism with imagination. It should be one of the jobs of the labour movement to persuade the present Government to take it really seriously.

COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENCE OF TRADE UNIONS SET UP IN BRISTOL

An organisation has been formed in Bristol to fight any legislation which would tend to restrict the freedom in industrial action of the trade union movement. Styled the Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions, the organisation is sending a petition to workers in factories all over the South West and in South Wales. The petition expresses complete opposition to all legislation which would interfere with rights of unions to bargain or threaten the freedom of action of shop stewards. Anyone wanting copies of the petitions should write to Danny Ryan, 39, Bridge St., Barrow Rd., Bristol 5. This development is extremely interesting in view of the campaign against the trade unions in the press just now. It is to be hoped that other groups of trade unionists follow this example.

ANTI-APARTHEID ACTIVITIES*

Sharpeville Day: Sharpeville's 6th anniversary will be commemorated this year with a dramatic presentation in the Central Hall, Westminster, on March 21st. The production will attempt to answer in dramatic form, the kind of questions about South Africa that still remain when all the books on the subject have been read. The producer is John Hales, a member of the Royal Shakespeare Company, with wide experience in television and with the company at Stratford. Well-known writers are preparing the script and top-class actors and actresses will be taking part. Tickets are available from 89, Charlotte Street, at 5s, reserved, 2/6d at the door.

Thames Valley: A new group was formed at a meeting in Slough Town Hall, on Tuesday March 15th. The Town Clerk told the committee that "the Council has decided that all charges should be waived for this occasion."

Bristol: Workers in Bristol factories have been receiving leaflets from local anti-apartheid supporters on arrival at work. The leaflet, which stresses the "slavery" conditions under which African workers in South Africa have to live, has been well received on the whole. The Bristol committee has also been making wide contact with local organisations, providing speakers, attempting to get local trade union branches to pass anti-apartheid resolutions and give financial support, and to get the local co-operative to carry out the boycott of South African goods.

Queen Mary College: Students at Queen Mary College, London, kicked off their South Africa week last month with a well-attended meeting addressed by Brian Bunting on "freedom of speech and the effectiveness of opposition parties." The week aimed to raise money for the prison education scheme run by the National Union of South African Students. Also in the programme were events arranged by the college film, folksong and dramatic societies, and the group running Freedom from Hunger lunches at QMC organised two lunches for the week. There was a photographic exhibition depicting life in South Africa.

Glasgow: Another victory in the campaign to secure local authority boycotts of South African goods was won last month when the City Labour Party Policy Making Conference in Glasgow passed unanimously a resolution calling on the Corporation to emulate the example of Aberdeen. In accepting the resolution on behalf of the Labour Group which controls the Corporation, Councillor Bill Gray said it should be the beginning of a campaign throughout the West of Scotland. Glasgow is only the second authority in Scotland to take the decision, but with a population of 1,000,000 it adds significantly to the size of this rapidly mushrooming protest.

Epsom: The Rhodesian-South African "Unholy Alliance" was the theme of a meeting organised last month by the Epsom and District Anti-Apartheid Committee. Joe Slovo spoke on the South African tie-in to Rhodesia, while Nelson Samkinge, the representative in London of the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union, spoke on Rhodesia and UDI. The meeting passed a resolution deploring the local MP, Sir Peter Rawlinson's recent call for negotiations with Smith.

Northallerton: The new Northallerton and Thirsk committee in Yorkshire is pushing up Anti-Apartheid News sales through new agents and local libraries.

* Extracted from Anti-Apartheid News, price 9d p.p., 89, Charlotte St., London W. 1. or 10/- for a year's subscription.

OPEN LETTERS IN THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN

The following two Open Letters, which were published by 'Humber-side Voice' with the support of the Hull Youth Forum, were delivered to audiences at public meetings during the North Hull By-election in January. They are reprinted here as examples of a valuable form of activity which can help to keep the local sights on socialist principles, and which will redefine these in terms which can elicit a direct response on the basis of local experiences.

An Open Letter to the Ministry of Transport, Barbara Castle

Dear Mrs Castle,

Welcome to Hull, and congratulations on your recent appointment as Minister of Transport. We believe you to be a very good choice for this job, as this is clearly the time for new ideas and imagination to be applied to the colossal transport problems with which Britain is faced. We are confident that you will agree with us that devices like parking meters do hardly any more than scratch at the surface of the traffic problems in towns, and that a fully co-ordinated transport system for the whole country, as promised in the Manifesto before the last General Election, will provide the solution on Socialist as well as commonsense grounds.

One obvious point is that future development of towns and whole areas depends on the existing transport connections with the rest of the country, and to close down railway lines because they are at present making a loss is short-sighted in the extreme, (apart from being unfair to the passengers who have a right to expect a reasonable public service). Many of the lines that the Tories proposed to close down connected future development areas with the rest of the country. Imagine Birmingham or Manchester building up or maintaining their prosperity with road links alone !

The recent Devlin report on the docks has shown how much needs to be done in this field as well, but the logical conclusion of Devlin's arguments, (which the report unconvincingly avoids), is that the docks should be nationalised completely. Any solution, however, should not be worked out in isolation, but rather as part of the plan for an integrated transport system.

The Humber-side region, of course, is an ideal case in point. It is crying out for this new kind of planning. Present transport deficiencies are holding back the possibilities of great industrial prosperity, and a decision to build a Humber Bridge would mark a break-through of national importance. Of course it would be expensive, but how much are we now wasting every year in fuel, wages and time through traffic jams ? How much development of industrial potential are we preventing ? London is rightly getting a new Underground Line; Hull should get its Bridge.

We are convinced that the people of Hull do not want a minister who is looking for more railway lines to close down, (are you certain of the long-term advisability of closing the Hornsea, and the Beverley to York lines ?) But we do believe that they would appreciate a far-sighted minister who is determined to organise an expanding transport system; with ports, docks, railways and roads under full public ownership and workers' control.

Continued over /

An Open Letter to Mr. Anthony Crosland, Minister of Education

Dear Mr. Crosland,

We welcome ministerial moves to encourage and extend Comprehensive Education but, in view of our local difficulties, we would ask you the following questions:-

1) In view of the shortage of teachers, when are we going to begin the 'crash programme' of teacher recruitment promised in October 1964? Does anyone in the Cabinet think that a take-home pay of £13 is going to attract many bright youngsters into the profession?

2) When are we, in Hull, going to be able to get rid of infants' classes of 50 or more; or, indeed, some secondary classes of 39? (We are very careful to try and avoid the figure of 40)

3) The Minister has said that the best form of Comprehensive Education is the 11 to 18 school. We believe that the need to re-organise primary education makes the pattern proposed for Hull (5 - 9, 9 - 13, 13 plus) educationally more sound. Has the educational case put forward by the N.U.T. been examined?

4) When shall we see the 're-organised family allowances' to encourage poorer families to keep their children at school beyond the age of 15 (another 1964 promise)?

5) Do you intend to make the public schools part of the state system; or merely provide more free places for 'our' children in them? The latter would surely bolster up the privileged sector, and have the effect of seducing some of our best working class children from their natural loyalties by simply adding them to the 'old boy' network.

We look forward to your replies to these questions.

D.A.T.A. AND THE PRICES AND INCOMES BILL

by Tom Nicholls

This month's D.A.T.A. Journal comes out with a strongly worded editorial attacking the last Government's proposed "early warning" legislation on prices and incomes. "This proposal is thoroughly bad. Much the greater part of British industry and commerce is privately owned and is run for private profit. Britain has not a planned economy and it is grossly unfair to attempt to control wages when there is no control on profits and dividends. A measure of restraint on prices is not the same as the control of profits and dividends," the editorial states. It concludes with a call for all divisional councils and branches to make their views known to MPs, to trades councils and loyal Labour Parties.

D.A.T.A. has also issued a duplicated pamphlet on "The Prices and Incomes Bill" setting out what its purpose is and why it should be opposed by trade unionists.

WORKERS WANTED: Our increasing circulation and our deeper involvement in a whole number of campaigns and socialist enterprises is placing an increasing burden on the small band of people who bring out The Week. We urgently need typists, envelope writers, duplicator operators, stamp stickers, etc. Please contact us if you are prepared to do any work at all.

It is a conveniently neglected fact, that in March, 1946, the former colonial ruler of Vietnam officially recognised the existence of an independent Republic of Vietnam under the presidency of Ho Chi Minh, who had won general elections held in January of the same year. I quote from the official statement: "The Government of France recognises the Republic of Vietnam as a free state having its own government and its parliament, its army and its finances, forming part of the Indo-Chinese federation of the French Union." It soon became apparent, however, that France wanted to retain colonial control of the rich, southern province of Indo-China. As a result, fighting broke out between the recently recognised Republic of Vietnam, and the French colonial army.

After three years of fighting, to further their attempt to re-establish colonial control, now over the whole of the country, the French set up a puppet State of Vietnam, headed by Bao Dai, who had been puppet emperor under the Japanese and had formally and voluntarily abdicated when the Republic of Vietnam was established and recognised in 1946. It is this wholly illegitimate, foreign imposed puppet state (the terms are literally descriptive) that forms the "legal" basis for all the subsequent Saigon regimes.

By 1954, the French and their puppet regime had lost the war with the Republic of Vietnam. Rather than press the victory to its ultimate conclusion and risk military intervention and possible nuclear bombardment by the U.S., however, the Vietnamese agreed to negotiate a cessation of hostilities, and to settle the question of representation by an internationally supervised election. This is what the Geneva Accords were about. The whole basis of the Accords was that an election would be held by June, 1956, to decide which of the two states of Vietnam was the legitimate representative of the Vietnamese people. On the one hand, there was the Republic of Vietnam, headed by Ho Chi Minh, representing a coalition of indigenous nationalist forces, ratified by a general election under universal suffrage, which is generally acknowledged by Western observers to have been indicative of the state of public opinion at the time, and recognised by the French as a free state in 1946. On the other hand, there was the puppet state, headed by Bao Dai, created by a foreign power, supported by a foreign army, and having no legitimate claim to sovereignty in Vietnam.

The elections to decide the issue between the two governments were never held. Instead, another foreign power, which had recently paid the full military bill of the French colonial war, engineered its own puppet, Ngo Dinh Diem, into control of the quisling regime, and prevented the holding of elections, thus destroying the entire basis of the Geneva Agreement. Nothing that has happened since has changed the fact that the Saigon government is a regime created by a foreign power, in the interests of a foreign power, is maintained by a foreign power, and has no legitimate basis for its claim to represent the Vietnamese people.

The Diem regime soon found itself faced by a new rebellion. In part this was because of Diem's ruthless repression of all political forces in the South. I quote the correspondent of the Economist, who was an eyewitness to the first two years of Diem's rule: "Instead of uniting it, Diem has divided the South. Instead of merely crushing his legitimate enemies, the Communists, he has crushed all opposition of every kind, however anti-communist it might be...He has been able to do this, simply and
continued over/

Vietnam, the cold war and Labour continued/

solely because of the massive dollar aid he has had from across the Pacific, which kept in power a man, who by all the laws of human political affairs, would long ago have fallen. Diem's main supporters are to be found in North America, not in Free Vietnam."

A second element in the rebellion was the fact that just as the Japanese and French puppet regimes had won collaboration from the landowning classes, so did Diem's. Under Ho Chi Minh's Republic, however, the peasants had been given their land. Hence a situation developed which was described in U.S. News and World Report in the following terms: "After the war against the French was over in 1954, the big Vietnamese landlords came out of 'retirement' on the French Riviera or in Paris or in Saigon and with the help of U.S.-trained and U.S. equipped soldiers went back into the countryside and said to the peasants: 'All right let's have our land back, plus eight years of back rent....'"

The resistance to this counter-revolution, as well as to the terrible repression visited by Diem on the population formed the ground of the revived rebellion. As the rebellion gained strength, the Americans poured in men and material in support of their puppet regime. In 1963 Diem was deposed at a time when, according to reliable reports, he was negotiating secretly with Hanoi and the Liberation Front to implement de Gaulle's proposals for the neutralisation and re-unification of Vietnam.

A good number of the 9 subsequent regimes in Saigon also fell on the heels of reports that they were seeking a peace and neutrality which was abhorrent to their American masters. Indeed, we now know that the reason for the bombing of North Vietnam, begun in February 1965, was that the Liberation Front was about to achieve a "decisive success" in the South, and the Saigon regime was on the verge of coming to terms. As Walter Lippman described the situation: "at the beginning of 1965 not only had the Saigonese army lost control of the countryside with the exception of five or six cities, but the government in Saigon was disintegrating and was on the verge of making a deal with Hanoi." To prevent the pacification of the Vietnamese war, and their own enforced exit from the area, the Americans began their wanton bombing of the peasant economy in the North. As a result of the bombing, according to Lippman, "the one real change has been that the government in Saigon is now a dictatorship of four generals who are fully aware that personally they have every reason to avoid a truce and to continue the war." This is the ^{real} reason the bombing of the North was begun. Official talk about North Vietnamese aggression is of course pure doublethink. There is no independent South Vietnamese state against which the North Vietnamese could have committed aggression. The Geneva Agreements are explicitly based on the recognition that there is only one country, Vietnam, with more than one "state", however, claiming to represent the Vietnamese people. North Vietnam is not a foreign power with respect to South Vietnam. If there is war now between the states in North and South Vietnam, it is a civil war, and the only foreign powers, the only powers committing aggression are the U.S., its satellites and allies.

In fact, moreover, the State Department White Paper lists only six native North Vietnamese 'infiltrates' into South Vietnam prior to the bombing (it does not mention, of course, the parachuting of South Vietnamese puppet soldiers into the North from 1961 on) To make eminently clear what happened when the U.S. escalated the war, I would like to quote to you from a speech made by Senator Wayne Morse of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, on December 11, 1964, that is two months before the

continued next issue/

CONSTRUCTIVE SOCIALIST SUPPORT FOR THE LABOUR PARTY

The following is the text of one of the Circulars which "HumberSide Voice" is distributing during the General Election campaign:

In Hull, dockers have been striking regularly for many weeks now in support of their demand for better wages. In Vietnam, peasants and workers have been fighting for many years for the right of self-determination. The two things seem unconnected: we believe that they are part of a common struggle, which bears directly on the General Election.

The private port employer is a labour contractor: he gets an order to discharge a ship, hires the workers to do the job, and makes a profit from the difference between his charges and his wage bill. He performs no useful service: he is a middleman licensed to make money. The contract could be made directly with the workers' representatives. Whilst the private employer exists, he will fight to keep his wage costs down. In these conditions, workers must fight to get their wages - their standard of life - up. So it is with all employment in a capitalist society. The private employer gets between the workers and the community that they would like to serve directly.

In fighting for his profit margin, the employer (the property owning class) has many allies: the Press, the Law, the Education system, the State. Workers long ago realised the need to create their own supports and alliances against all this. They were the Trade Unions, and - in this country - the Labour Party. With these instruments they have made some inroads into the State, the Law, etc. But when successes come the way of the workers, (and we are speaking of the vast majority of the people in this country) the employers seek to weaken these instruments which have produced the changes. If Trade Unions and the Labour Party can be persuaded to curb, instead of represent, the wishes of their members and supporters, profits can be made safe. This is what the Incomes Policy (a more complicated version of wage restraint) is all about. (We used to all agree, a short time ago, that the right to strike meant the difference between a dictatorship and a democracy).

The private, feudal landlord class of Vietnam strove might and main to reimpose its tyranny on the peasants of the Southern area of that country after the French withdrew in 1954. They were encouraged and assisted by the Americans. When the South rose in revolt against the unspeakable terror of the landlord regime, the Americans hastened to suppress their liberation struggle. They were acting for property against workers. That is why it is disgraceful that our Labour Government supports American action in Vietnam.

In the Incomes Policy and the Vietnam Policy we see two enormously wrong positions for a Labour Government to have adopted. We do not run away from these unpleasant facts because there is an election. We think many Labour votes can be saved and won by pointing out that there is a strong body of opinion in the Labour Party and the Unions which is struggling to stem the sharp rightward swing of Government policy. For electors who agree with us, we see absolutely no alternative to voting Labour. Tory Government would now, with the unhappy example made for them over the past few months, rush into law an unwholesome attack on Trade Union freedoms, and cheer on the U.S. the more, in Vietnam.

We therefore believe that Labour should be returned. With a bigger majority, the struggle for decent Socialist policies - against the Early Warnings Bill and the Vietnam policy - can develop.